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Syrian Role in Middle East Terrorism

I. The Assad regime has a long history of using terrorism to retain power and strengthen its influence in the Middle East.

- We can count over 30 assassinations, bombings and attempted attacks in the Middle East and Europe since early 1980 attributable directly or indirectly to the Syrian regime.
- Many of these attacks have been directed against such opponents as the Muslim Brotherhood.
- Recent reporting suggests the Syrians are supporting terrorist activities aimed at undermining Lebanese and moderate Arab support for the Israeli-Lebanese agreement.

II. We have reports of Syrian involvement in attacks and planned operations against US nationals and facilities.

- The investigation into the bombing of the Embassy in Beirut is not yet complete. However, preliminary evidence indicates the involvement of Syrian intelligence.
- Various sources report Syrian-sponsored terrorist plans to attack US diplomatic facilities in Beirut

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[redacted]
and Baghdad and unspecified American targets in Amman, Istanbul, and Saudi Arabia.

- We believe reported Syrian plans to attack the US Embassy in Kuwait were shelved, perhaps because of a US diplomatic representation in Damascus.
- We also have reason to suspect Syrian involvement in earlier assassinations of Bashir Gemayel in late 1982 and prominent PLO moderate Isam Sartawi in April 1983. [redacted]

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III. Growing Syrian influence among anti-Arafat Palestinians is a worrisome development.

- This increases PLO susceptibility to anti-US influences including Libya, Iran and radical Palestinian groups.
- We have reports that Syria has put together a terrorist network with headquarters in Damascus and the Bekaa Valley, and training facilities in Syria to conduct operations in Lebanon.
- [redacted] report that, under Syrian auspices, such radical groups as Black June, PFLP-General Command, and various Lebanese leftists have increased their collaboration. [redacted]

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